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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This is Applicants' response to the Office Action dated November 26, 2003. A Petition for a three-month extension of time is attached.

In the Office Action of November 26, 2004, claims 1-19 were rejected and claims 1-30 were subject to a restriction requirement. Applicants hereby formally elect to prosecute Group I-1, claims 1-19. Claims 20-30 are canceled by this amendment.

Claims 1-19 were rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph. Applicants' counsel has made numerous amendments to the claims to place the claims in a condition, which is believed to overcome the rejection. In the event that Applicants' counsel has inadvertently overlooked a matter, counsel respectfully requests a telephone interview to authorize action necessary to place the claims in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 2, and 11-18 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Furuya et al. (JP 06-111838). Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite: "and that at least one of the plates comprises structural elements being covered with a catalyst coating and the structural elements extending into the reaction gap, and wherein the height of each of the structural elements is less than the reaction gap height." Support for the amendment is found in the instant application at page 15, lines 3-6.

Claims 14 recites: "and wherein a plurality of the structural elements comprising at least one of a fin shaped structure, a bar shaped structure, and a U-shaped structure." Claims 18 and 19 recites specific structure for the structural elements. Support for the amendment is found in Figure 5. The structural elements as now recited in claims 1 and 14, 18-19, are not suggested by Furuya et al. At most, Furuya et al. discloses walls that extend from one plate to another. Furuya et al. does not suggest a burner element for introducing air perpendicular to the flow direction of the fuel gas/oxygen mixture as recited in claim 6.

Claims 1-3 and 5-18 were rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tawara et al. (JP 05-155602). Tawara et al. discloses a bent spacer 102 that helps hold a film-like catalyst 101 between chambers walls 100. Tawara et al. does not suggest that the spacer 102 be covered with a catalyst coating. Tawara et al. certainly does not suggest structural elements should have a height less than the reaction gap. Nor

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does Tawara et al. suggest the specific shape of the structural elements recited in claims 14, and 18-19. Tawara et al. does not suggest a burner element for introducing air perpendicular to the flow direction of the fuel gas/oxygen mixture as recited in claim 6. No prima facie case of anticipation or obviousness can be established.

Claim 4 had been rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tawara et al. in view of Patel et al. (US 4,567,117). The Examiner has taken the position that the selection of rectangular or square waveform for a catalyst is conventionally known in the art as evidenced by Patel et al. However, Tawara et al. fails to disclose "a catalytic coating on at least one of the plates" and "structural elements being covered with a catalyst coating" as recited in claim 1. Tawara et al. discloses a film-like catalyst 101 supported on both sides by bent spacers 102 that are inserted between chamber walls 100. The rejection fails to identify sufficient motivation for modifying Tawara et al. to arrive at Applicants' invention, nor does the rejection explain how Tawara et al. should be modified without destroying the function of the film-like catalyst 101, bent spacers 102 and chamber walls 100. No prima facie case of obviousness can be established. The combination of Tawara et al. and Patel et al. certainly does not suggest the specific shaped structural elements recited in claims 14 and 18-19. Tawara et al. and Patel et al. certainly do not suggest a burner element for introducing air perpendicular to the flow direction of the fuel gas/oxygen mixture as recited in claim 6.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of the claims now in the case.

Attached to this amendment is a request for a three-month extension of time. Please charge General Motors Deposit Account 07-0960 in the amount of \$950.00 to cover the cost of this extension of time in responding to the Office Action dated November 26, 2003.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment